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INFO RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 000525

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/A (T.REOTT), EUR/RPM (R.CARLAND), AND EUR/CE
(Y.SAINST-ANDRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/07/2018

TAGS: MARR PREL PGOV MASS AF SZ

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: SWITZERLAND FOCUSED ON CIVIL SECTOR;
SWISS ASSISTANCE TO ANA SUSTAINMENT APPEARS UNLIKELY

REF: A. STATE 97991
1B. BERN 246

Classified By: POL/E Counselor Richard A. Rorvig; reasons 1.4(b) and (d
).

¶1. (C) Poloff delivered the message and request in reftel A on September 19 to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Acting Senior Coordinator for South Asia Agnes Christelet. While undertaking to review the request, Christelet informally expressed doubt that the GOS would find the necessary domestic political support for direct assistance to ANA sustainment. She noted that Switzerland does not traditionally provide assistance to foreign militaries outside of the realms of civil-military relations. Referring to FM Calmy-Rey's statement to the June Paris Support Conference for Afghanistan, Christelet emphasized that Switzerland has committed to maintaining support for Afghan civil reconstruction at a level of CHF 15-20 million (USD 14-18 million) per year for the next few years (reftel B). With regard to projects in the security sector, Christelet reported that Switzerland was working with Germany to increase the number of women in the Afghan police force, and also was considering projects related to border controls and customs in the context of the OSCE.

¶2. (C) Poloff followed up on the reftel A request with DFA Senior Coordinator for South Asia Yves-Pierre Fux on October ¶3. Fux said that the GOS had made a political decision earlier in the year to restrict Switzerland's Afghan reconstruction assistance to civilian sectors. He added that this does not mean that Swiss cooperation with the ANA is completely out of the question, but that the DFA would need to coordinate further with the MOD and other Swiss agencies regarding the request for ANA sustainment support. (Comment: Fux's tone, however, was not optimistic. End Comment)

Along the lines of comments made previously by Christelet, Fux said that Switzerland is working together with Canada on possible projects to help train Afghan border police and/or customs officials. He commented that their intention is to develop projects bilaterally with a view to coordinating them within the broader OSCE effort. Post will continue to press the ANA sustainment issue with Swiss officials at appropriate opportunities.

CONEWAY